LOCAL NEWS

The Daily Colonist.

(ESTABLISHED 1858)

CLASSIFIED

No. 17—101st YEAR | VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, THURSDAY, JANUARY 1, 1959 | SECOND NEWS SECTION

Victoria's Leaders Speak:

Here Are Our 1959 Hopes!

Almost all of Victoria's leaders in every field have favorite projects they would like to see accomplished in the year that lies ahead.

Here are the things that some of the top men in municipal life are looking forward to:

Mayor Percy Scurrah: The start of a civic auditorium, "because I believe it is maybe the most important project we have ahead of us. I say that because I believe it would be useful to more people and bring a greater return in service and satisfaction than anything else at the moment."

Reeve George Chatteron of Saanich: Passing of a subdivision control bylaw and preparation of a 20-year-plan for Saanich development, a five-year capital budget plan within it and a detailed plan for the area of initial development.

Reeve-elect George Murdoch of Oak Bay: The maintenance of municipal services at a high level and municipal taxes at a low level.

Reeve A. C. Wurtele of Esquimalt: Provision by the municipality of more residential lots in Rockhill Heights, and further improvement of Fleming's Beach park at the end of Lampson. (Further improvement of Kinsmen-Gorge Park is assured.)

Police Chief John Blackstock: "A year free of traffic deaths, that's my wish for 1959!"

George Masters, administrator of Royal Jubilee Hospital: A start on the $2,500,000 extension of the hospital—"That occupies all our attention, and we are certainly anxious to start."

All City Unions Seek Negotiation

The city now has had notice from all its employees' unions that they want to negotiate working-agreement changes for 1959, City Manager C. C. Wyatt said yesterday.

Only three of the unions, the public health nurses, police and outside workers, have indicated specifically the wage increases they will seek.

Year Past One of Progress

Council Faces '59 With Hope, Cheer

Some Dreams Shattered

By R. O. MARRION

City council, unaltered in the December elections, will begin 1959 cheerful in the knowledge of achievement in the year behind and anticipation of more achievement in the year ahead.

The year 1958 has been a progressive one for council, even though one or two of the dreams of the beginning of the year were shattered.

A major hope of council when 1958 began was that Woodward Stores Ltd. would buy city hall and nearby property for a new department store, and that as a consequence a new city hall would rise on Cathedral Hill.

DREAM SHATTERED

That dream was shattered when the price of some of the privately owned property dissuaded the company from going ahead.

The new city hall, however, was only one of the attractive parts of the dream—the aldermen also contemplated happily the increase in tax revenue that would result from the new commercial development.

That part of the dream was coming back at the end of the year, as a consequence of plans for downtown improvement through the creation of parking facilities and shopping malls.

NEW FIREHALL

These plans themselves were achievements of 1958, as was the beginning of construction of a new headquarters firehall between Yates and Johnson at Camosun, but completion of the projects will be chalked up to council's credit in the year ahead.

As 1958 faded away, the new firehall was in an advanced state of construction and expected to be occupied in early spring, and independent appraisals of property were being made as a first step toward building a parking facility across View, between Douglas and Blanshard.

There were indications, however, that this would not be the first off-street parking facility to be provided by the city in its new program. Instead, the site of the present headquarters firehall and public market probably will be the first, soon after the fire department moves out—a metered, "longer-term" lot.

RETIRED FROM FIELD

After long debate, council retired from the field of store-hours control in 1958 and threw shopping "wide open."

Another achievement of 1958 was the abandonment of the dumping-at-sea method of garbage disposal, and with it the nuisance of tin cans and other rubbish drifting back to Victoria beaches.

Council approved a contract to have the garbage hauled away and dumped at a private site in the Highland district, but while making the necessary changes at the garbage wharf began using the sanitary-landfill method itself for the first time, to create new industrial land at Mud Bay.

A couple of the other achievements of 1958 could be credited only partly to city council: illumination was installed in Beacon Hill Park, at the expense of the provincial government through the Capital Improvement District Commission, and big improvements were made in the city-owned Beaver and Elk Lakes parks.

From All Over, Cards Pour In

From all over the world, from comrades he fought beside at Vimy Ridge where he lost a leg, from curling cronies in Saskatchewan, from old friends at Wolseley, Sask., where he was postmaster for 38 years, from new friends in Victoria where he has lived eight years, Christmas cards are still coming in by the hundreds to Frank Vincent's hotel room in the King's Hotel. When you're 74, he says warmly, its nice to be remembered.—(Colonist photo by Jim Ryan.)

He's a Welcome Guest

First-footer Malcolm McIntyre, 7, of 1284 Tolmie, was practising his role yesterday in carrying out old Scottish tradition, which says first person across threshold in New Year should be male and should be carrying fuel, food and drink.—(Colonist photo.)

Once Again

Saanich Smashes Building Records

Saanich, far out in the lead as the fastest-developing Greater Victoria municipality, smashed its own previous record for construction in 1958.

Saanich issued 1,363 permits during the year for construction valued at $11,019,837. Previous record was set in 1955, at $6,369,310.

The permits issued in 1958 included 828 dwellings, valued at $9,386,200. Previous record for dwellings was also set in 1955, when 754 permits were issued and the total value was $4,925,390.

This December, Saanich issued permits for construction valued at $743,500, including 64 dwellings worth $690,400. The previous December the total was $486,900, including 41 dwellings worth $464,800.

Victoria city fell short of a new record, although its total was better than in the two previous years. The city issued 7,101 permits in 1958 for construction valued at $8,403,983. The 1957 total was $6,881,166, and the 1956 total $7,937,808. The record—$11,542,223—was set in 1949.

In December, the city issued 403 permits for construction worth $1,547,132, compared with 505 permits for construction worth $268,851 in December, 1957.

Like Saanich, Esquimalt set a new record, issuing 226 permits during the year for construction valued at $2,056,298, including a $665,000 high school. In 1957 the 12-month totals were 176 permits and $880,208.

Fishing Float Tenders Asked

The federal government has called for tenders for renovation of the fishermen's floats at the foot of Erie Street, A. DeB. McPhillips, Victoria MP, announced last night.

He said the job calls for raising the dock to a height of 14 feet above high tide level and making extensive repairs to the floats to provide more berths for fishboats.

Parliament Prorogued

The 28th session of the Older Boys' Parliament of B.C. prorogued yesterday afternoon with all the pomp and dignity of senior parliaments throughout the Commonwealth.

The parliament's lieutenant-governor, Dr. E. N. C. McAmmond, was escorted into the chamber by a guard of honor composed of an RCMP officer, four YMCA members and Sergeant-At-Arms Paul Marley.

HAROLD BALLARD

★ ★ ★

Seen In Passing

Harold Ballard a bit on the sleepy side but still clear-headed after working New Year's Eve and well on into this morning. (Driver for C & C Taxi, he's used to night-time driving. With wife **Jane** he lives at 549 Agnes, and uses off-duty daylight hours in twin hobbies of fishing and color photography. Three children are grown: **Marguerite,** teaching at Craigflower School; **Gertrude,** a VON nurse at Huntsville, Ont., and **Tom,** now taking an X-ray technician's course at Vancouver General Hospital) . . . **Jim Jacob,** clean-up expert at the legislative buildings and amateur political commentator, complaining that the boys' parliament is not as lively as it used to be.

100-Year Flag Lowered

A flag-lowering ceremony formally ended the B.C. centennial yesterday, but in Greater Victoria one more celebration was planned—a celebration for those who contributed most to making the year's events a success.

Public Works Minister W. N. Chant, watched by a small group composed almost entirely of some of his fellow cabinet ministers and newsmen, lowered the blue centennial flag at the legislative buildings for the last time.

That ended the centennial for the province, but later in the day, Ald. Geoffrey Edgelow, Greater Victoria centennial committee chairman, announced plans for a banquet for those who helped most in local celebrations.

City Survey Ordered

Mayor Percy Scurrah said yesterday a survey will be made to determine whether the city's requirement of an off-street parking space for every apartment in a new building is "too tough."

The mayor disclosed his plan for a survey after spending an hour in discussion with Victoria real estate agent Milton King and a Toronto realtor, Gordon Chapman, on Victoria's building and zoning regulations.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Feeling Half Mad? Then You're a Scot

Don't be alarmed today if you bump into any of your usually dour Scottish friends and they seem half-mad with merriment and keep wanting to put their foot in it.

Don't send for the doctor, either, because your friends will be back to gloomy normal by tomorrow.

All they're doing is celebrating the New Year in the traditional Scottish way, with "first-footing" being the major symptom.

The first person over the threshhold in the New Year is the "first-foot" and the household will have a lucky New Year if the first-footer is male, dark and is carrying a piece of coal, bread or cake and some grog.

Those proud and clannish folk from north of the Tweed have always marked the New Year with more enthusiasm than Christmas.

This fact is strongly emphasized in a fascinating old book in the Colonist library called "The Book of Days." There's no date on it, but it appears to have been published long before the turn of the century.

★ ★ ★

'First-Footing' Major Symptom

★ ★ ★

Of New Year's Day in Scotland, the book says:

"It almost appears as if, by a sort of antagonism to the general gravity of the people, they were impelled to break out in a half-mad merriment on this day.

"Every face was bright with smiles; every hand ready with the grasp of friendship. All stiffness arising from age, name, rank, gave way.

"The soberest felt entitled to take a licence on that special day."

One type of first-footing was also described in the book.

"It was a time for some youthful friend of the family to steal to the door, in the hope of meeting there the young maiden of his fancy, and obtaining the privilege of a kiss, as her first-foot.

"Great was the disappointment on his part, and great the joking among the family, if through accident or plan, some half-withered aunt or ancient grand-dame came to receive him instead of the blooming Jenny."

First-footing, with its carrying of food and drink to friends' houses, reached such a peak in Edinburgh in the early 1800s, the book says, that the streets "were more thronged between 12 and one in the morning than they usually were at midday."

The custom probably began when people visited their more needy neighbors and took what food and drink and fuel they could spare, so giving their friends a boost towards a more prosperous and happy new year.

That's why it's considered bad luck for a first-footer to enter empty-handed. No one is sure just how the dark-haired man came to be considered luckier than a fair one.

But the belief is strong, and as one Scot pointed out, many a fair male and fair female have been made to wait on the porch until the right man came along.